

CITY OF SAN ANTONIO

PLANNING DEPARTMENT
P.O. Box 839966
San Antonio, Texas 78283-3966

POLICY STATEMENT ON NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS, CITY-SPONSORED ORGANIZATIONS, AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

City Council Review January 6, 2005

Master Plan Consistency

The City of San Antonio Master Plan includes several statements related to neighborhoods including:

Goal 1: Preserve, protect and enhance the integrity, economic viability and livability of San Antonio's neighborhoods. Policy 1g under this goal, calls for encouraging the establishment of neighborhood associations, recognizing their importance in achieving the goals set for neighborhood development.

Registration Benefits

- Permits organizations within the San Antonio City Limits and Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) to register
- Provides notification of public hearings for zoning, plan amendment, proposed demolition and board of adjustment cases to voluntary and mandatory neighborhood associations and city-sponsored organizations within 200 feet of the proposed change
- Guides and unifies community efforts for neighborhood improvement
- Fosters working relationships with City Departments and City Council
- Posts an official listing with E-mail addresses available on the City's web page
- Supports communication network to area agencies
- Encourages business, property owner, resident, church, and civic institution participation

Organizational Principles

The Planning Department requires voluntary and mandatory neighborhood associations, city-sponsored organizations and community organizations to follow these standards:

- 51% of membership must reside within the association's geographic boundary
- 49% of an association's membership may be at-large
- Associations must adopt written by-laws and elect officers
- Associations must schedule regular meetings

Definitions

Voluntary Neighborhood Association – a voluntary, not-for-profit association organized for neighborhood improvement that has a geographic boundary.

Mandatory Neighborhood Association – a homeowners or property owners not-for-profit association that requires mandatory membership for all or a majority of the owners of property, in accordance with Title 11 of the Texas Property Code.

City-sponsored Organization – a not-for-profit organization such as a Partnership Project, a Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization Project, community development corporation, neighborhood improvement district, or groups formed due to a historical designation or overlay-zoning district. A Cellular-On-Patrol group may register, as its scope of work includes neighborhood improvement.

Community Organization – a voluntary, not-for-profit group; a city-wide organization such as a governmental or public service agency; a board or commission; a council district neighborhood alliance; a group representing the needs of special populations; or a homeowners association management company.

Household- consists of all the people who occupy a housing unit

Housing unit- a house, an apartment, a mobile home or trailer, a group of rooms or a single room that is occupied as a separate living quarters, or if vacant, is intended for occupancy as a separate living quarters.

Boundaries and Geographic Size

A voluntary neighborhood association shall select well-defined boundaries that include a contiguous area of appropriate geographic size. The association shall include at least fifty (50) households, and its boundaries, generally, should follow major arterials, natural barriers and other environmental features.

Notification Required: Changes to boundaries shall be done with the cooperation and participation of all affected voluntary neighborhood associations and submitted by each party in writing to the Planning Department.

A mandatory neighborhood association shall set boundaries in accordance with the properties included into the association's jurisdiction by covenant or dedicatory instrument. The mandatory neighborhood association shall include at least fifty (50) households. Boundaries may overlap other mandatory and voluntary neighborhood associations and city-sponsored organizations.

City-sponsored organizations will adhere to the city-approved boundaries of their respective programs and may overlap boundaries of other city-sponsored organizations and mandatory and voluntary neighborhood associations. However, boundaries are not registered for community organizations.

Boundaries identified by a detailed map or written description shall be submitted with the registration application. To amend its boundaries, a registered association or group may submit a written request to the Planning Department stating the purpose of the amendment.

Formation of new Neighborhood Associations

Voluntary Neighborhood Associations - The proposed voluntary neighborhood association shall provide a formal written notice to the registered group of its concerns about policy and practice.

- The registered voluntary neighborhood association shall hear the concerns from the group requesting secession, at its regularly scheduled board meeting. A written response shall be sent to the proposed group with answers and/or action steps to addressing the concerns.
- If the proposed group believes the response and/or action plan does not satisfactorily address its concerns, a new NA may be formed voluntarily by mutual agreement of all parties or involuntarily through the petition process listed below.
- If parties are in agreement to allow the formation of a new neighborhood association, a notarized affidavit, signed by the registered association's officers allowing boundary overlap or secession shall be submitted to the Planning Department with the proposed association's completed registration form.

Process for Boundary Overlap

Voluntary Neighborhood Associations – Boundaries of voluntary neighborhood associations shall not overlap more than 50% of the area of any registered voluntary or mandatory neighborhood association, or city-sponsored organization. Procedures to submit an application with boundaries that overlap another group's boundaries are listed below:

- The requirement for a voluntary neighborhood association that overlaps boundaries with an existing registered group is to circulate a petition to households within the disputed area. The collected signatures must represent a minimum of 51% of the affected households, in accordance with the most recently published U.S. Census.
- The Planning Department will provide a petition document to be circulated for neighborhood signatures. The petition must be submitted with the completed registration form. The signatures on the petition cannot be more than 30-days old from the date the results are submitted.

Process for Secession

In a request for secession, no more than 50% of a registered voluntary neighborhood association's area shall cede to another voluntary neighborhood association. A proposed voluntary neighborhood association that intends to secede from a registered voluntary neighborhood association must adhere to the organizational principles, boundary/geographic size criteria and the procedures listed below:

- Circulate a petition to all households, as determined by the most recently published U. S. Census, within the disputed area. The collected signatures must represent a minimum of 61% of the affected households within the disputed area.
- The Planning Department will provide a petition document to be circulated for neighborhood signatures. The petition must be submitted with the completed registration form. The signatures on the petition cannot be more than 30-days old from the date the results are submitted.

Annual Report

Neighborhood Associations, City-sponsored Organizations, and Community Organizations are required to submit an annual report to the Planning Department. The annual report documents recent elections, updates officer listings and verifies boundaries. The annual report carries a sixty (60) day deadline.

Inactive Status

If the Planning Department does not receive an annual report within the 60-day deadline, the neighborhood association, city-sponsored organization or community organization is considered inactive and will no longer receive notices of public hearings.

Removal from Registry

The City of San Antonio may remove an organization from the city registry if the organization has remained inactive for two (2) years or more.

Any voluntary or mandatory neighborhood association, city-sponsored organization or community organization may request, in writing, removal from the city registry. The officers, as recognized by the most current by-laws, will submit the request to the Planning Department.

Grievances

The association's by-laws will govern disputes concerning Board of Directors or Officer or Committee elections. Each affected board is responsible for following its by-laws. The City will recognize the most recently approved set of by-laws in the database. Grievances against neighborhood associations, city-sponsored organizations and community groups are a civil matter and are the responsibility of the group. The City of San Antonio does not mediate disputes among groups and/or its members. However, the City of San Antonio may assist with referrals to the Bexar County Mediation Center.

